



POSITION STATEMENT

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 540 – HIGHER EDUCATION - TRANSFER PLATFORM – ESTABLISHED (TRANSFER WITH SUCCESS ACT 2.0)

Sponsor – Senator Elfreth, et al

April 4, 2022

**DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

Position: Support

Senate Bill 540 requires the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to establish a transfer platform to facilitate the transfer of students from community colleges to public four-year institutions of higher education, and require receiving institutions to approve the transfer of a credit or course if at least 70 percent of the learning outcomes are equivalent to those at the receiving institution.

All community colleges and public 4-year institutions of higher education would be required to participate in the transfer platform. In addition, a nonpublic institutions of higher education that receives state funds will be required to participate if it has a total of at least 50 students who have transferred from a community college. Other nonpublic four-year schools may participate if they choose to do so. The platform will aid students and advisors in understanding what courses will transfer to another institution, and will easily facilitate the process of transferring credit.

As more courses have moved online, and students are delaying their enrollment in a four-year university, the need for students and advisors to clearly understand how their courses will transfer to other schools. Both Montana and Idaho have adopted platforms that streamline the transfer process and allow students to access to an individual dashboard for tracking their progress towards a credential or degree, which benefits students, institutions, and future employers.

Creating and nurturing a strong workforce is one of the Greater Baltimore Committee's most important priorities. Without a strong workforce, Maryland's economy cannot innovate, grow, and create jobs. The GBC's Preparing for the Future: A Regional Workforce Development Initiative was created to ensure that the region's high-growth industries have a pipeline of highly skilled workers who can contribute to future economic growth, and a report was released in late 2020 outlining recommendations to meet the needs. Since the report's issuance, the GBC has continued to regularly convene a diverse network of stakeholders to assist in implementation of the recommendations.

A number of the recommendations in the Preparing for the Future report involve increased coordination among those providing training for various credentials for family-supporting wage jobs. Providing a transfer platform will help students and advisors visualize the path to degree or credential, and will be a valuable tool for students, educational institutions, and future employers.

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In addition to its alignment with the GBC Preparing for the Future Report, Senate Bill 540 is consistent with one of the core pillars for a competitive business environment and job growth in the GBC report *Gaining a Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland*.

Workforce that is highly-educated and meets Maryland's business needs. Maryland's secondary and higher education institutions must offer access to quality instruction at all levels and cultivate a workforce that is well-suited to a modern economy and to the specific needs of Maryland's business sectors.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 540.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 67-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.